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Barwood No Longer Affiliated With UFO Believers

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Stig

Saturday, 5 September 1998

Bayless, Barwood view secretary of state role differently

By Jill Jordan Spitz
The Arizona Daily Star

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Betsey Bayless and Frances Emma Barwood are both Republicans.

They both have held public office.

They're both 54.

They're both seeking the Republican nomination to be secretary of state.

And that's where the similarities end.

Bayless, who was appointed secretary of state last September, is warm and understated. Barwood, a former Phoenix City Council member and vice mayor, is high-spirited and outspoken.

Bayless prides herself on her efficiency, integrity and leadership. Barwood takes pride in her take-no-prisoners sensibility and willingness to take on whomever and whatever is in her way.

Bayless is buttoned-down and businesslike. Barwood appeared at her campaign kickoff with UFO researchers who vowed the candidate would bring unexplained, extraterrestrial visitations to the forefront.

After unexplained lights appeared over Phoenix in March 1997, Barwood - then a city councilwoman - demanded an investigation. She now says she still wants to know the source of the mysterious V-shaped light formation reported by hundreds of Phoenix-area residents, but she maintains she has no particular

interest - or belief - in UFOs.

She says she no longer is affiliated with the UFO believers who attended her kickoff press conference.

But perhaps the biggest difference between the candidates is in their ideas for cleaning up the voter rolls. During her year in office, Bayless has worked to purge the names of voters who have died, moved out of the state or been convicted of a felony.

Barwood says that's not enough. She believes voter fraud is rampant - particularly among illegal aliens and people voting under false names. The only way to combat that, she contends, is to require voters to show proof of identification and U.S. citizenship at the polls.

"There is absolutely nothing to check the validity of voters," Barwood said. "We found people voting under criminal aliases, bogus names. Even animals were registered to vote."

Although the U.S. Justice Department has ruled it illegal to ask for proof of citizenship, Barwood said that's a ruling she's prepared to challenge.

"We need to have somebody in that office who's not afraid to deal with the hard stuff," she said. "If that means taking on the federal government and saying, 'This is our state and this is the way we're going to do it,' so be it."

In Bayless' view, her job is to uphold the law - not to fight it.

"Whatever I do from this office will be done according to the law, because that's the oath I took." she said. "I am unwilling to put tax dollars at risk and our elections at risk by undertaking elections that could be illegal in the eyes of the federal government."

Beyond cleaning up the voter rolls, Bayless wants to increase voter turnout. Her office mails birthday cards and voter registration forms to 18-year-olds, and plans extensive research and community forums to determine why people don't vote.

Barwood said she would push for greater Election Day accountability, with large windows that allow the public to watch as ballots are counted. She also would like all counting videotaped, and favors keeping ballots for the term of each office.

Considering the office's relatively unexciting role overseeing elections and processing paperwork, differences between the candidates may seem inconsequential.

But consider this: The secretary of state steps into the governor's office should it be vacated. And consider this: In the past two decades, three secretaries of state have ascended to Arizona's highest office.

Last fall, Jane Hull was sworn in after former Gov. Fife Symington was convicted of federal bank fraud. In 1988, Rose Mofford became governor after Evan Mecham was impeached.

Wesley Bolin moved into the governor's office in 1977, after Raul Castro resigned to become U.S. ambassador to Argentina.

The winner of Tuesday's primary will face House Minority Leader Art Hamilton, who is the sole Democrat seeking the post.

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